

After they were through eating their pancakes, they came back and buried her in a shallow grave. They went home and slept off the night's atrocity, while her family had nightmares of where Ashton was.

When Ashton's body was located by police, the outlaws decided to run in the darkness of the night. They fled north to Canada, but they did not run fast enough or hard enough. They were caught at the U.S.-Canadian border after police typed their names into the national criminal database.

This tragic and unspeakable crime hits close to my heart. As a father of four and grandfather of five, no father wants to lose a child in the fullness of youth. As a former prosecutor and judge, I believe in justice. And there must be justice, Mr. Speaker.

Justice for a young girl who had a full and rewarding life ahead of her, who was murdered just so a couple of cowardly cunning criminals could see what it looked like to kill somebody, when a young girl took her last gasping breath. There must be justice for her family and her friends who must now endure life without her.

These two killers must also get some justice, Mr. Speaker. Justice is getting what one deserves. These teens will no doubt cry and whine for mercy, but justice must rule the day. Justice for these two demons who brutally executed a young Ashton and extinguished a bright light in this world.

Some individuals will now argue that these two 18-year-olds should be treated with compassion because of their age. Mr. Speaker, these two killers were macho enough to violently end the life of a young girl just to see the results. They should be macho enough to accept the punishment in the penitentiary, where they belong.

Victims should not be discriminated against based upon the age of the offender. As King Solomon was once quoted as saying, "Justice will only be achieved when those who are not injured by crime feel as indignant as those who are."

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MILITARY READINESS

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Missouri is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to contrast two statements for you to set the stage on what we are dealing

with regarding the United States Army.

"Help is on the way." That is what President Bush said to our military during the 2000 campaign when they were in pretty good shape.

And "No." That is what General Schoomaker, the chief of staff of the Army, answered when I asked him if he was comfortable with the readiness levels of the nondeployed Army units here in the United States.

Let me put it in very clear terms. Our Army is in a crisis. Our forces are fighting valiantly in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the strain of that continued effort has put our preparedness to deter or to fight somewhere else, if we must, at strategic risk. The crises in North Korea, Iran, the Middle East, show how quickly things can change and how they can go wrong. We must be prepared. And right now the Army is not.

President Bush, during the 2000 campaign, strongly criticized the Clinton administration because two divisions were below their appropriate readiness ratings. He said, "If called upon by the Commander in Chief today, two entire divisions of the Army would have to report 'not ready for duty, sir.'"

Today nearly every combat brigade located within the United States would report that they are not ready for duty. They are at the lowest levels of readiness.

Most nondeployed units in the active Army are reporting that they are not able to complete the expected wartime missions. The exact numbers, of course, are classified. Army readiness for units not in Iraq has steadily declined and has fallen to levels that will limit our ability to project ground forces.

Every nondeployed National Guard combat brigade in the Army is reported at the lowest level of readiness. Forty percent of the Army's ground equipment is deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The army has depleted its prepositioned overseas war stocks of equipment. The Army is so strapped for equipment, they are planning on downloading prepositioned ships loaded with combat equipment to help fill shortages.

Mr. Speaker, the Army has lost over 1,000 wheeled vehicles, over 100 armored vehicles, and 100 helicopters since the start of the war in Iraq.

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Guard units in the U.S. are suffering severe equipment shortages which will affect their ability to respond to emergencies in their home States, such as Katrina.

Equipment readiness is suffering as the priority for repair, parts and equipment is only toward the combat theater. The Army is now having a crisis funding its installations at home because of poor planning and the lack of support from the administration. The recent supplemental funding resolution increased the installation budgets by \$722 million, but the Army is still short

\$530 million to meet minimum support levels through the remainder of the fiscal year.

Each installation is being forced to find ways to cut their operating budgets. These cuts are affecting vital training and family support, which further degrades the Army's readiness posture.

Over \$290 billion has been spent in Iraq, with no end in sight. The Army requested more money in the recent supplemental, but the President's Office of Management and Budget cut \$4.9 billion from the Army's request for the 2006 war supplemental before sending it over here to Congress.

During the 2000 election, the current administration told our military, help is on the way. That is clearly not the case. The administration has failed to request the funds needed for the defense of this Nation. We must give the Army what it needs. The Army will need sustained funds, \$17.5 billion this year alone, to start getting well. We cannot shortchange them. We must provide a new direction for the Army, with sustained equipment and manpower, so that we can project power to protect America, wherever and whenever necessary. That is exactly what we must be prepared to do.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE SCOURGE OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I request to address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). Without objection, the gentleman from Nebraska is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, underage drinking flies under the radar screen most of the time, and I guess the reason for that is that alcohol is legal and is widely accepted. The average age 12- to 17-year-olds begin drinking is 12.7 years of age.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimated the number of underage deaths due to excessive alcohol use is roughly 4,554 a year. In other words, in one year we lose more young people to underage drinking than we have lost in Iraq in 3 years. The death rate is six times higher for underage drinking.

Another death rate that is six times higher is alcohol kills six times more young people than all other drugs combined: heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana. Six times more die from underage drinking.

Teens who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to

become addicted to alcohol than someone who starts drinking at age 21. Yet the Federal Government spends about 25 times more annually to combat youth drug use than to prevent underage alcohol use. In other words, we spend \$1.8 billion on combating heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana, compared to \$71 million for underage drinking.

Most people know that alcohol is a gateway drug. It leads to all of these other drugs directly, and it appears to be much more fatal and more dangerous when you look at the raw numbers.

Television ads for alcohol products outnumber responsibility messages by 32 to 1. In other words, you will see 32 ads promoting alcohol, and many of those ads are very attractive to young people, for every one that talks about responsible use of alcohol. From 2001 to 2003, the alcohol industry spent \$2.5 billion on television advertising their product, and only \$27 million on responsibility programs.

Underage drinkers currently account for 17 percent of all alcohol sales in the United States; and in my State, Nebraska, underage drinkers consume 25 percent of the alcohol sold.

Young people tend to binge drink. They do not drink socially. Ninety-two percent of the alcohol consumed by 12- to 14-year-olds is consumed when they are having five or more drinks in a row, which is called binge drinking, or, more often, drinking to get drunk.

Recent studies have found that heavy exposure of the adolescent brain to alcohol interferes with brain development. We will take a look at this poster. On the right is a young person 15 years of age who abstains from alcohol, who was asked to do a comprehensive memory test. On the left is a young person who is a binge drinker who is sober at the time and asked to do the same test. You see the amount of cortical activity, the amount of brain activity firing in the young person who is an abstainer compared to the one who uses and abuses alcohol.

So there is quite a difference in this regard, and I would present a hypothesis of mine and that is that a great many young people who drop out, a great number of young people who do very poorly in school are affected dramatically by alcohol, binge drinking, and alcohol abuse.

There are a couple of other things on this poster that I think are worthy of note. There are roughly 3 million teenagers who today are full-blown alcoholics. Alcohol, as we mentioned, kills about six times more people than all other drugs combined. The total cost of underage drinking to the country is \$53 billion a year. \$53 billion a year. It is a huge expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, we have introduced legislation, Congresswoman ROYBAL-ALLARD, Congressman WAMP, Congressman WOLF and Congresswoman DELAUNO, and Senators DEWINE and DODD have introduced the Sober Truth

on Prevention of Underage Drinking, the STOP Act, which would, number one, create a Federal agency coordinating all of the Federal programs aimed at underage drinking. Right now we have underage drinking programs spread across 12 agencies. They are not coordinated. Sometimes they duplicate each other and are not very effective. So we would want those coordinated.

Secondly, it authorizes a national media campaign directed at adults. The number one indicator of whether a young person will use alcohol and abuse alcohol is parental attitudes. So many parents really believe the myth if a young person is using alcohol, then they will not use marijuana, they will not use cocaine, they will not use heroin, when exactly the opposite is true. Because anymore, a person that abuses one substance will abuse another, and alcohol usually leads to further abuse.

The Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act, STOP Act, would:

Create a Federal Interagency Coordinating Committee to coordinate the efforts and expertise across agencies for underage drinking;

Authorizes a national media campaign directed at adults;

Parents are the number one influence on underage drinking;

Parents & friends purchase 65 percent.

Provide additional resources to communities and colleges and universities to prevent underage drinking;

1,700 college students die each year

70,000 rapes or sexual assaults

Increases Federal research and data collection on underage drinking.

So we hope that we can have support for this act. We think it is important, and we urge its passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PROBLEMS WITH HOUSE OFFSHORE DRILLING BILL

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, the offshore oil drilling legislation that passed the House last month has a lot of problems. One of its biggest failings is that the bill overrides and ignores the long-standing, bipartisan objection to new drilling off the California coast.

The people of California have repeatedly made it clear that they oppose this wrong-headed approach. In fact, opposition to this legislation is unanimous in California that even in the middle of a highly charged race for Governor, the Democrats and Repub-

licans are on the same page on this one issue. State Treasurer Phil Angelides, a Democrat, opposes the House bill, pointing out that it would remove the critical protections for California's coastline and also financially punish States that decide to protect their environment and coastal economies by continuing to oppose offshore oil drilling.

The Republican Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, sent another letter to the Senate this week restating his opposition in no uncertain terms. In his newest letter, which I am submitting for the RECORD, he writes: "Our coast is not for sale, and no amount of promises of money or other incentives will alter my position on that."

Well, I am disappointed that so many Members of the House voted against California's interests last month. Our State's Senators have strong records of spelling for the people of California, so I am not concerned about them. But I do want to make sure that the Senators from around the country realize that any legislation that opens the California coast to drilling will be a non-starter in our State and should be rejected.

As the Governor wrote: "Anything short of upholding the current moratorium in perpetuity would be unacceptable to Californians." Governor Schwarzenegger also wrote something very interesting: "California has the most aggressive energy efficiency measures in the Nation. Because of our efforts, California's per capita energy use has remained nearly flat, while the nationwide energy use has increased by nearly 50 percent."

What the Governor is telling the people of this Nation is that had you made the same choices that we made starting back in 1974 with the first fuel crisis, you would have been able to save a huge amount of energy in this country. While California has continued to grow, our per capita use has remained flat, and that is 50 percent better than the rest of the Nation. That means that not only do California consumers save a great deal of energy and they reduce the pollution to the atmosphere; they also save a great deal of money.

As the other body considers the legislation that was passed out of this House this last week, I hope they will remember that energy conservation and innovative alternative approaches will guarantee us far more energy independence in the future than the short-sighted House bill that will require the ruining of the coastlines of this great Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)